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EUROPLAT EMPLOYABILITY SURVEY: CORE FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Problem of Employability of Psychology study graduates



- A student's **potential for employment**
 - in terms of his/her knowledge, skills, competencies, qualifications
- Issue raised by post-Bologna process with split study programmes in psychology:

What can bachelors (B.A.s) of Psychology do?

- **Core questions for research survey:**
 - Learn about the **context and the meaning** in which the concept of employability is used
 - QUALITATIVE SURVEY – presented at EUROPLAT 2011 meeting in Istanbul
 - How is employability of psychology graduates perceived and improved across Europe?
 - QUANTITATIVE SURVEY – this presentation ;)

Objectives of the quantitative part of employability survey



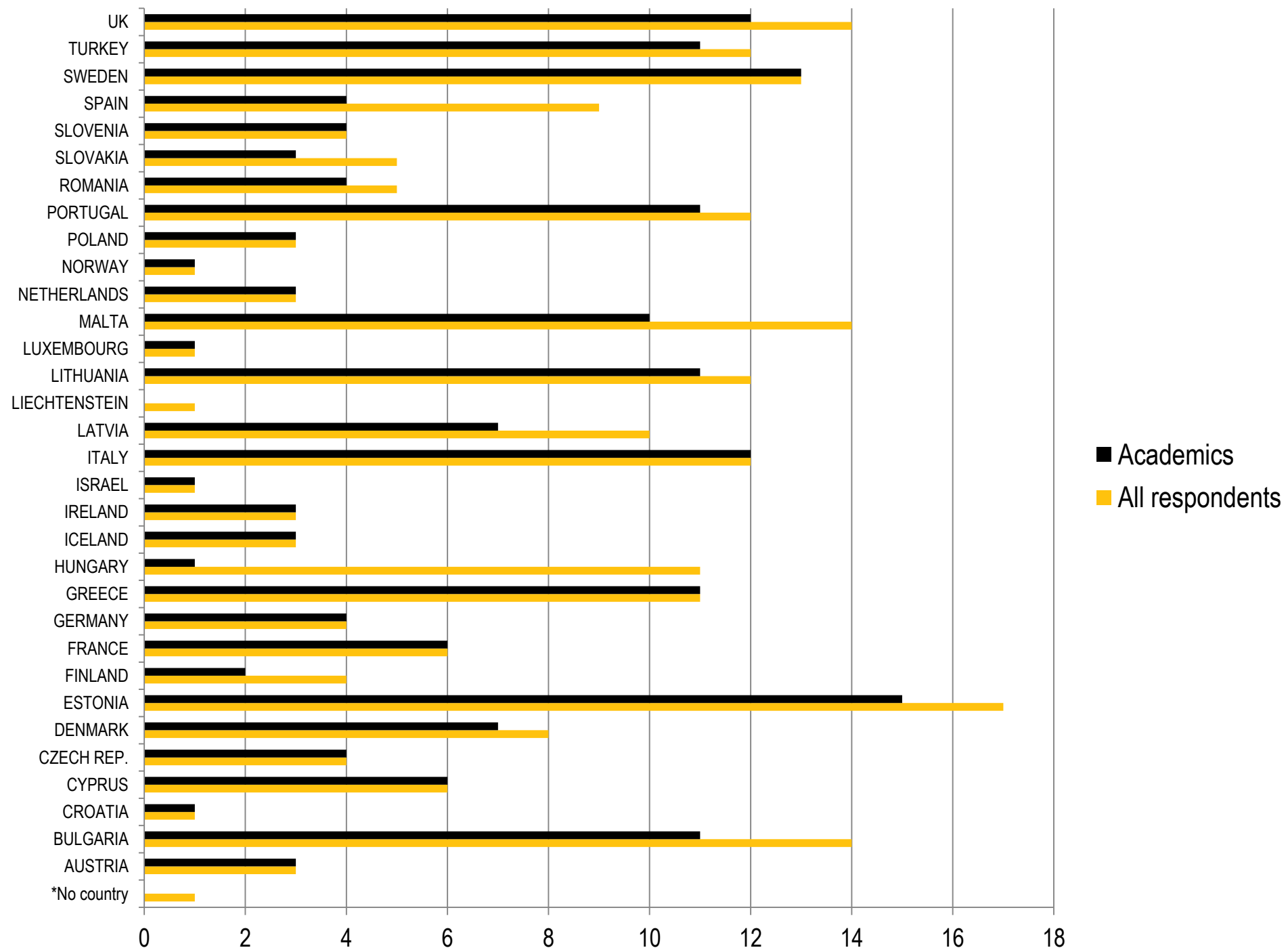
At national level and institutional level (psychology departments) across Europe:

- 1) how relevant the employability/employment issue is;
- 2) what the current problems are in the employability/employment area;
- 3) to explore the best practices in dealing with employability/employment issues.

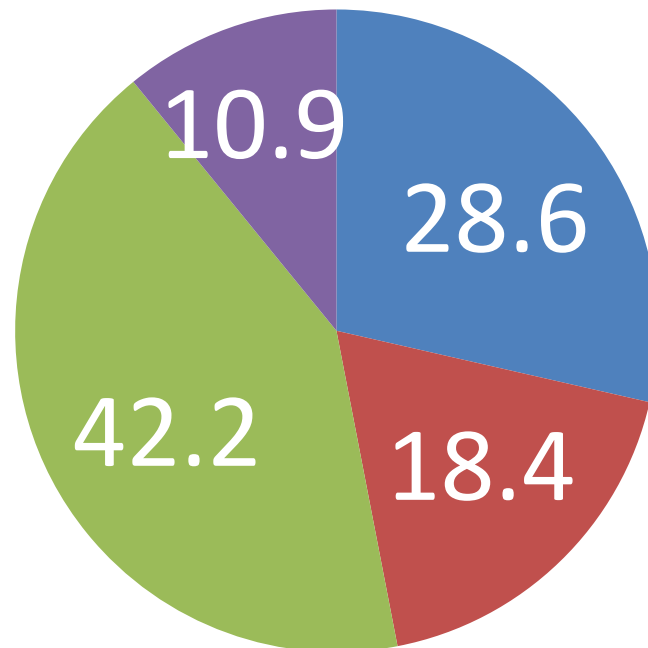
Sample & Method



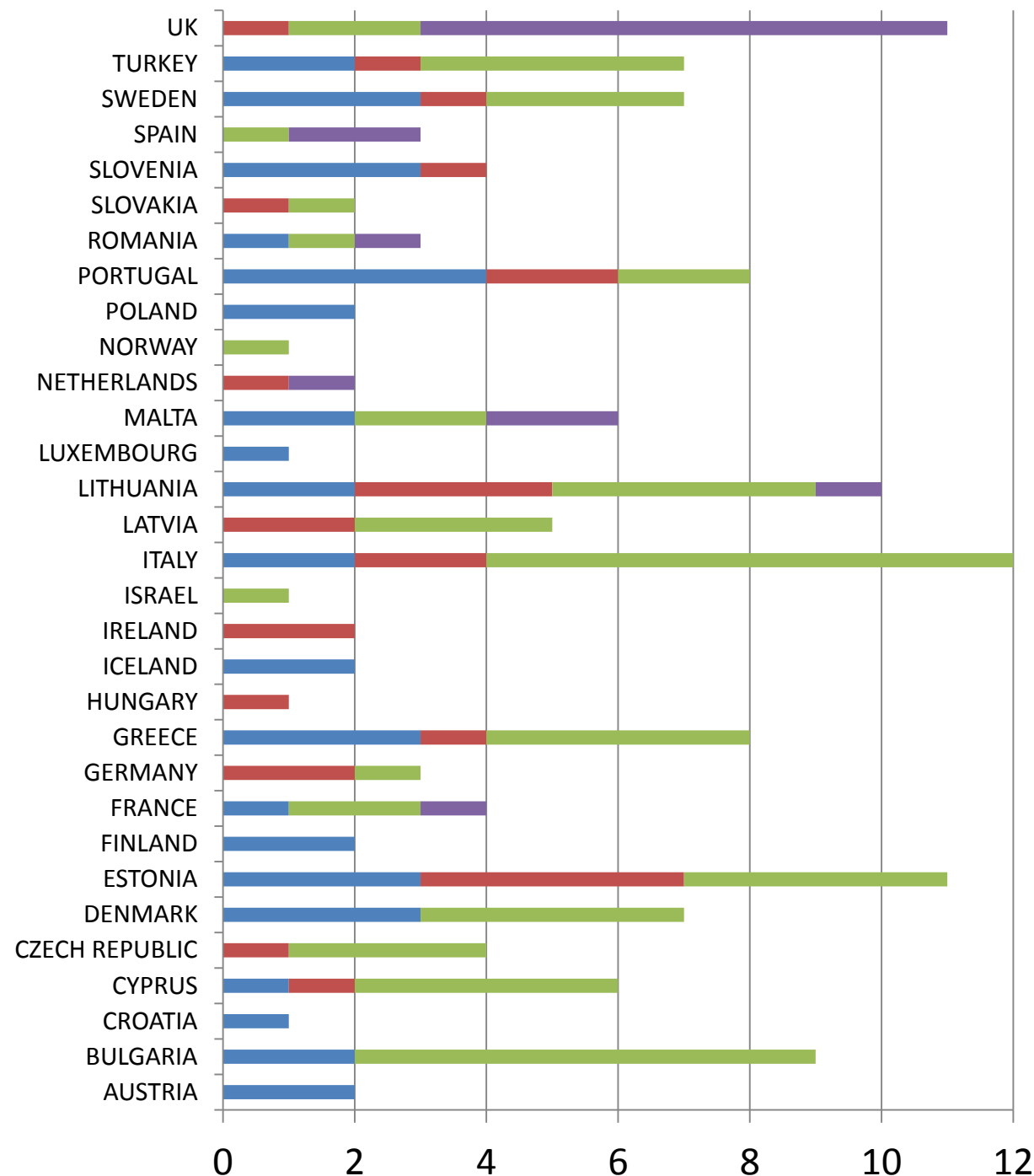
- *snowball procedure* – seeds sent to 32 Europlat project partners from different psychology departments and the 52 associated Europlat partners.
- only **228** valid responses (32 countries), **188** academics
- **university teachers** or teacher-researchers, teacher-practitioners
 - *Some responses form teachers or psychologists in service or...*
- **online survey** (mostly closed questions)



I think that in the national context
employability or employment of
psychology graduates with BACHELOR
degrees is currently (n = 147)

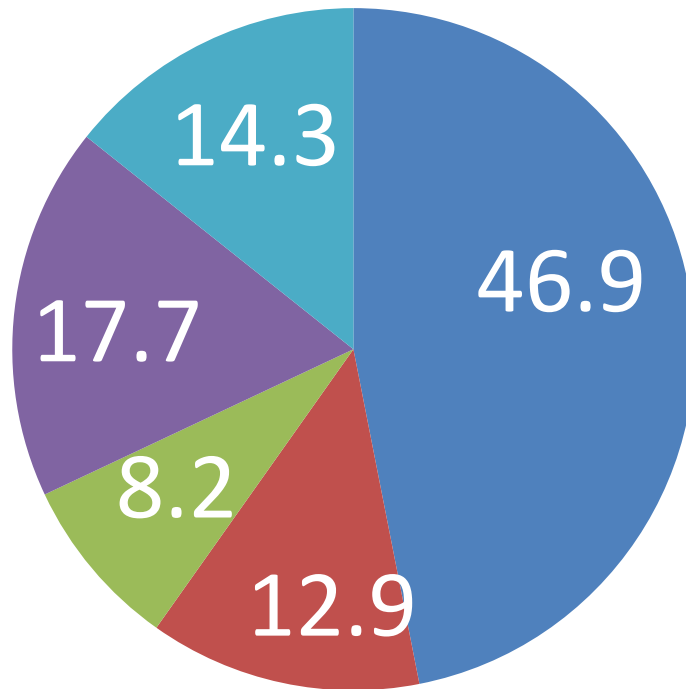


- Not an issue
- A new issue
- A known but unresolved
- A recognised, researched, solutions implemented



- not an issue (almost no one talks/writes about it)
- a new issue (the problem is recognised, solutions are proposed but they are not yet implemented)
- a known but unresolved issue (some steps have been taken but generally not very successful)
- a recognised and researched issue worked on (one or more plausible solutions have been implemented)

Unemployment is currently a problem for (n = 147)



- psychology bachelors as well as masters
- psychology bachelors only
- psychology masters only
- not a problem
- I have not data/information about this

Evidence: Collection of employment / employability data (by national agency etc).



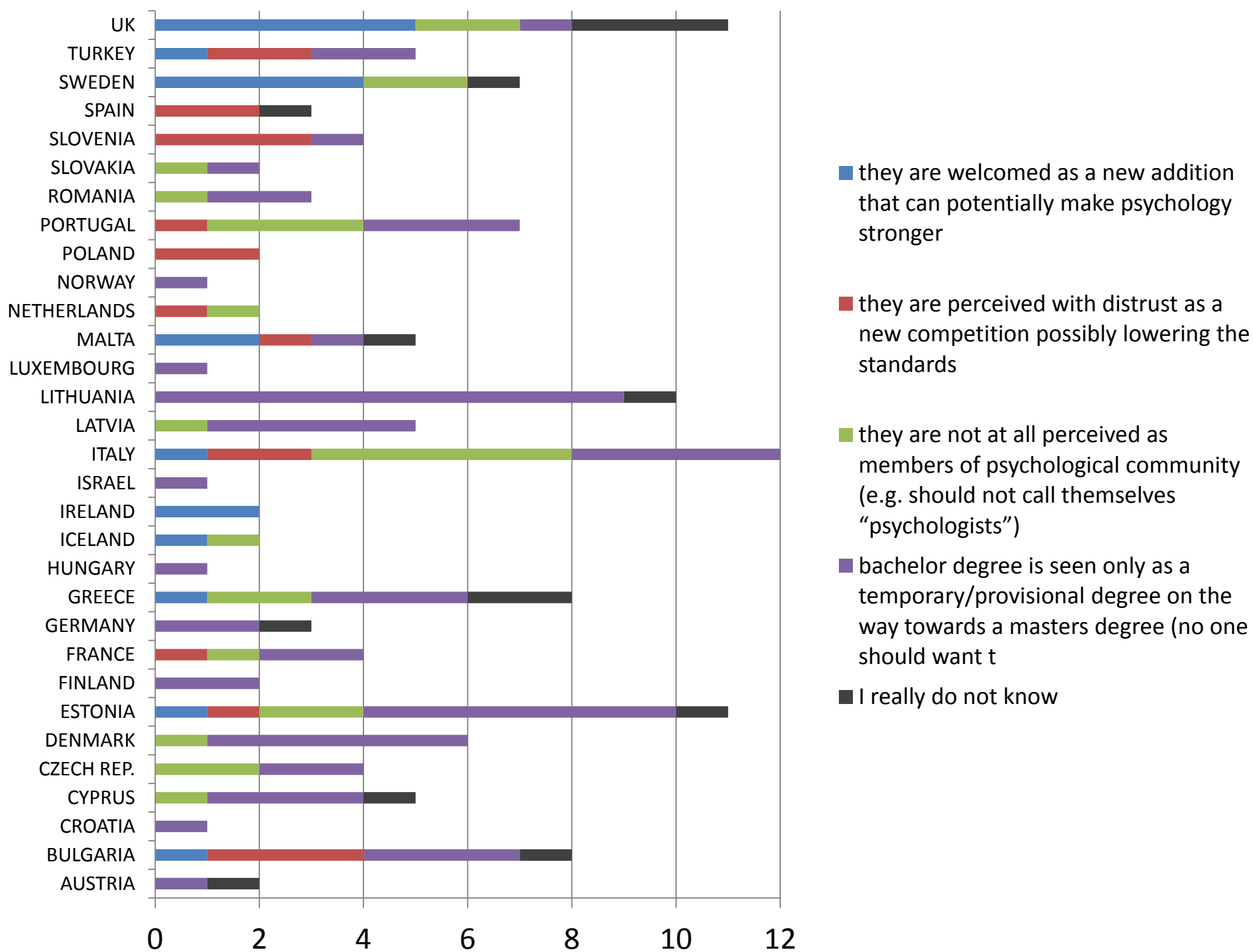
yes, data are available specifically about psychology graduates	24 %
yes, but no specific data are available about psychology graduates (e.g., only aggregated results are public)	18 %
no, and I wish there was something like that	45 %
no, and I do not see any need for such an activity	12 %
yes, data are available specifically about psychology graduates	24 %

- No records available at the department - 45 %
- No informal records kept - 80 %

Conclusion: Prevailing attitude of the general psychological community towards the bachelor graduates (n = 140)



they are welcomed as a new addition that can potentially make psychology stronger	13 %
they are perceived with distrust as a new competition possibly lowering the standards	14 %
they are not at all perceived as members of psychological community (e.g., should not call themselves “psychologists”)	19 %
bachelor degree is seen only as a temporary/provisional degree on the way towards a masters degree (no one should want to stay on this level)	44 %
I really do not know	10 %



Competencies of BA's



- Research and Methodology
- Social, interpersonal skills
- Knowledge of psychological theories
- Statistics and Data analysis
- Communication skills
- Testing, assessment
- Critical, logical thinking
- Writing skills
- Counselling, guidance, intervention
- Presentation skills
- IT and computer skills

Positions for Psychology BA's

- **Traditional fields:** educational psychology, organizational psychology, counselling
- Teaching, education
- Human resources field
- Marketing, advertising
- Managers
- Administration, secretary
- Research, survey, marketing research
- Journalist

Perceived major problems with employability of bachelors (n=81)



there are too many bachelors and not enough jobs for them	61 %
psychology graduates compete for the same jobs with non-graduates (e.g. therapy...)	33 %

Activities at departments aimed at the bachelors' employability issue (n=106)



informal discussions with colleagues	61 %
formal sessions (i.e., with goals and clear implications for the study programme)	27 %
research project(s) focused on employability	17 %
curricular changes specifically aimed at increasing employability (new courses. modules. activities etc.)	44 %
opening new specialised or vocational bachelor-level study programs	14 %
conferences/meetings with potential employers	21 %
negotiations with representatives of psychological professional societies	21 %
incorporation/engagement of potential employers into study programme (e.g. internships. student projects...)	25 %
promote self-employment (e.g. unregulated psychological services. Internet services ...)	19 %
promote the building of one's own/unique portfolio of competencies (specialised certificates...)	23 %

Conclusion: Is the employability of psychology B.A.'s an issue?



- **DEVELOPED ISSUE**
 - B.A.'s are part of labour market and psychological community, multiple strategies being implemented.
 - UK, Ireland, and Cyprus
- **UNRESOLVED ISSUE**
 - Solutions (simple) have been proposed but they do not work (Estonia, Lithuania),
 - Scepticism and calls for the return to the pre-Bologna system (Italy).
- **NEW ISSUE**
 - Bachelor jobseekers a new phenomenon (Latvia, Czech Rep, Slovenia), discussions are under way, expectations.
- **NO ISSUE**
 - Slovakia – not enough B.A.'s to cause trouble OR it's students' responsibility.

Conclusion: Developmental stages perspective of psychology B.A.'s employability



1. Not an issue

- B.A. is just a formal degree (*everyone goes to M.A. study*)

2. Protectionism

- B.A.'s want to become professional „kind of“ psychologists (*professional community shouldn't let them*)

3. Special arrangements

- System of qualifications (*further education allowing B.A.'s into psychological professions; exploration of niches is profession for B.A.'s; non-professionals skill not accepted by professional community*)

4. Programme Differentiation

- a) Professional B.A. studies – *further education – psychology profession (EuroPsy approved)*
- b) Non-professional B.A. studies – *exploration of non-professional employment (professional community acceptance)*

Psychology M.A.'s employability



- only 10-20 % seek jobs outside traditional psychological profession at most departments
- major issue
 - not enough jobs (50 % of responses)

Employability Report available at www.europlat.org



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THANK YOU